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Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Comprehensive review of the welfare and recreation needs of all categories of peacekeeping personnel

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to the request of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations at its 2005 resumed session, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/300.

The report reviews the relevant aspects of the conditions of service of various categories of peacekeeping personnel, including international staff members and members of military and police contingents, and describes the current status of the reforms that are under consideration or otherwise under way, e.g., classification of duty stations as family or non-family, payment of mission subsistence allowance to staff officers and review of the rates of reimbursement to troop/police contributing countries for, inter alia, the welfare category of self-sustainment.

In the course of the present review, current welfare and recreation practices in peacekeeping missions were surveyed, which led to the identification of a range of issues concerning the need to improve the welfare of various categories of personnel. Those issues are described in the report, along with measures that the Secretariat proposes to take in order to address them.

The Secretary-General proposes that the General Assembly endorse the need for welfare and recreation arrangements for non-contingent personnel across the various peacekeeping missions.

* The document was delayed owing to additional technical and substantive consultations.

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I. Introduction

1. Having considered the report entitled "A comprehensive strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations" (A/59/710), prepared by His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, former Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations and then Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeeping personnel, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations recognized the importance of, inter alia, making adequate provision for the welfare and recreation of all categories of personnel in peacekeeping operations, and the primary responsibility of troop-contributing countries to provide such facilities to members of their respective contingents. In its annual report for 2005,[1] which the General Assembly endorsed in its resolution 59/300, the Special Committee requested the Secretary-General to take steps to improve the living conditions and welfare and recreation facilities for all categories of peacekeeping personnel and to carry out a comprehensive review of the various aspects of the welfare and recreation needs of those personnel, including classification of duty stations as family or non-family for United Nations staff, rules on rest and recreation and the development of minimum standards of welfare and recreation facilities, and to submit proposals based on the review.

2. The Secretary-General's comprehensive report on sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/60/862) described the threefold strategy of prevention, enforcement and remedial assistance to victims for eliminating serious misconduct in peacekeeping missions, particularly sexual exploitation and abuse. Along with a programme of awareness-raising activities, provision to peacekeeping personnel of adequate opportunities of welfare and recreation form an important part of the strategy to prevent sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. In July 2005, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations developed, pending conduct of the requested comprehensive review and institution of a full-fledged welfare and recreation strategy, the preliminary outline of an indicative welfare and recreation package, recommending to missions the establishment of integrated welfare committees, and gearing activities within the existing mission resources towards greater welfare of peacekeeping personnel. The report described the measures taken by the missions pursuant to the preliminary outline, and Member States were further updated on the continuing progress on welfare and recreation in the subsequent report of the Secretary-General on sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/61/957).

3. As to the Special Committee's request for a comprehensive review of the welfare and recreation needs of all categories of peacekeeping personnel, the Department of Field Support, through its Conduct and Discipline Unit, engaged the services of an expert, who carried out a detailed study of existing welfare and recreation policies and conducted a survey of welfare practices in the field in order to assess the welfare and recreation needs of various categories of peacekeeping personnel. The present report draws on the findings and assessments of the expert.

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 19* (A/59/19/Rev.1).

II. Review of rules relevant to welfare and recreation

4. The civilian component of peacekeeping personnel comprises mainly internationally and locally recruited staff and United Nations Volunteers. The current rules that are germane to their welfare, respectively, vary. The uniformed component of the peacekeeping personnel, which comprises military and formed police contingents, United Nations police officers and United Nations military observers, are similarly subject to a varying set of rules insofar as their welfare is concerned. Some of the rules concerning, e.g., international staff and members of military contingents, are, as recapitulated in the following paragraphs, currently under review by the General Assembly or will be considered by the Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment at its session from 4 to 22 February 2008.

A. Civilian peacekeeping personnel

1. International staff members

5. By requesting that the comprehensive review of the welfare and recreation needs for all categories of peacekeeping personnel should include, inter alia, a review of the rules on rest and recreation, and classification of duty stations as family or non-family for United Nations civilian staff, the Special Committee echoed related concerns earlier articulated by the Secretary-General within the broader context of human resources management reforms.

6. The report of the Secretary-General entitled "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide" (A/60/692 and Corr.1) proposed a new human resources framework, which was further elaborated in his subsequent reports entitled "Investing in people" (A/61/255) and "Harmonization of conditions of service" (A/61/861). The new framework described in those reports proposed to improve the conditions of service of staff in the field to meet the needs of an increasingly field-based Organization, through the streamlining of contractual arrangements and the harmonization of the conditions of service of Secretariat staff in the field with those of the United Nations funds and programmes. It would also provide for the designation of peace operations as family or non-family in accordance with the security phase decided by the Department of Safety and Security and the approach applied by the Inter-Agency Committee on Field Duty Stations of the Human Resources Network of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for coordination.

7. The reports also proposed that the special operations approach be introduced in duty stations that were designated as non-family for security reasons. Under this approach, the staff member and his or her family members would be installed at a location nearby having adequate housing, educational and medical facilities, referred to as the administrative place of assignment, and for which the staff member would receive payment of post adjustment, mobility and hardship allowance, assignment grant and rental subsidy. The staff member would then deploy to the non-family duty station and receive payment of a special operations living allowance to cover living expenses at the non-family duty station.

8. The above-mentioned reports addressed the issue of the harmonization of the scheme of rest breaks available to international civilian staff of peacekeeping missions with that operated by the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

Under the current occasional recuperation break scheme, staff in field missions are provided with five working days of time off for rest and recuperation purposes but are not provided with paid travel or travel time. In line with the scheme applied by the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, it is proposed that the occasional recuperation break be replaced by rest and recuperation travel, which would provide for paid travel to a designated location, five calendar days of time off and two calendar days for travel time.

9. If approved by the General Assembly, the above human resource reforms would contribute to improving the welfare and well-being of international staff serving in peace operations.

2. Locally recruited staff members

10. Staff members serving with peacekeeping operations who have been recruited locally are entitled to compensatory time off and/or overtime compensation. They receive two and one-half days of annual leave for every completed month of service and are entitled to hazard pay under conditions set by the International Civil Service Commission and approved by the General Assembly.

3. United Nations Volunteers

11. United Nations Volunteers have since 1992 served in almost every aspect of United Nations peacekeeping operations, including substantive areas such as political affairs, civil affairs, electoral support, humanitarian relief, human rights, civilian administration and administrative and technical support. They serve under contract with United Nations Volunteers, a programme administered by the United Nations Development Programme. United Nations Volunteers receive a volunteer living allowance, a settling-in grant, a hazardous duty station supplement and paid home visit after 24 months of service.

12. The conditions of service for United Nations Volunteers provide for rest and recuperation breaks in line with the policy of the organization in which they serve. Those serving with United Nations peace operations are entitled to an occasional recuperation break under the same conditions as other international civilian staff.

13. As the occasional recuperation break scheme does not provide for paid travel, Volunteers often find it difficult to purchase air tickets to locations outside the mission area for rest and recuperation purposes. Should the General Assembly approve recommendations to replace the occasional recuperation break with paid rest and recuperation travel, the rest and recuperation scheme for United Nations Volunteers serving in United Nations peace operations could be reviewed in consultation with the United Nations Volunteers programme.

B. Uniformed peacekeeping personnel

14. Uniformed personnel, who comprise the two principal categories of police and military, constitute by far the most numerous and, within mission areas, the most extensively deployed component of peacekeeping personnel. While police personnel serve with peacekeeping operations as United Nations police officers and as formed police units, military personnel serve as members of military contingents, staff officers and United Nations military observers. The military contingents and formed

police units (referred to as "contingent personnel" in the following paragraphs), are the two regimented categories of uniformed peacekeeping personnel that are deployed to peacekeeping operations pursuant to a memorandum of understanding concluded between the United Nations and the respective troop/police-contributing country.

1. Military contingents and formed police units

15. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, in its annual report for 2005, reaffirmed the primary responsibility of troop/police-contributing countries for the welfare and recreation of contingent personnel. This stems from the arrangements that govern the contribution of these personnel to peacekeeping operations, as provided in the Manual on Policies and Procedures Concerning the Reimbursement and Control of Contingent-Owned Equipment of Troop/Police Contributors Participating in Peacekeeping Missions (A/C.5/60/26, annex). The conditions of service of contingent personnel (including staff officers) are determined primarily within the framework of the model memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the troop/police-contributing country, which constitutes chapter 9 of the Manual.

16. The model memorandum of understanding not only lays down rates of reimbursements to troop/police-contributing countries and direct payments to contingent personnel, but also specifies the terms of understanding between the parties with respect to "self-sustainment", a logistical arrangement with potentially profound implications for the morale and welfare of the personnel. The standards of performance with respect to the categories of self-sustainment, against which actual verification of their provision is carried out, are set out in annex E to the model memorandum of understanding (A/C.5/60/26, annex, chap. 9). Some of these matters are further summarized in the guidelines to troop/police-contributing countries, incorporated into the model memorandum of understanding, as its annex G.

17. Military contingents (which include staff officers) and formed police units rotate their personnel once every 6 or 12 months, and are allowed annual leave of 2.5 days per month, i.e., 15 days for a tour of duty lasting 6 months. In addition to the reimbursements made to troop/police-contributing countries in relation to each contingent member — US$ 1,028.00, plus a personal clothing, gear and equipment allowance of $68.00, personal weapon and ammunition allowances of $5.00, per month per contingent member, and specialist allowances — the contingent members receive directly from the peacekeeping mission a daily allowance of $1.28 plus a recreational leave allowance of $10.50 per day for up to 7 days of leave taken during each six-month period.

18. Insofar as staff officers are concerned, these provisions were, pursuant to the proposals made by the Secretary-General (A/60/696), as modified by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/276. Accordingly, although the staff officers will continue to be members of military contingents, they will receive, as of 1 July 2007, mission subsistence allowance payments in lieu of reimbursements to troop/police-contributing countries. They will continue, however, to enjoy the same leave as other contingent members, with no entitlement to compensatory time off.

19. Contingent personnel's daily allowance of $1.28, which was established in 1956 and was originally set at $0.86, has remained unchanged at its present level

since 1974. The report of the Secretary-General entitled "Review of the methodology for rates of reimbursement to troop-contributing countries" (A/60/725 and Add.1) addressed the methodology, based on surveys of troop/police-contributing countries and a review of the daily allowance for soldiers. The matter was further considered by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) in its audit report on entitlements for military personnel (AP2006/600/05). In the OIOS assessment, the amount of the daily allowance established in 1974 would most likely not cover the costs it was intended for. In the same report, OIOS examined the current practice of payment to contingent personnel of a recreational leave allowance of $10.50 per day for a maximum of 7 days, although the personnel are entitled to 15 days' leave during six months of their assignment to a mission, and recommended that the practice be reviewed.

Measures to be taken

20. The Department of Field Support and Department of Peacekeeping Operations will submit Secretariat issue paper No. 8 for the consideration of the Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment at its session from 4 to 22 February 2008, recommending that the current recreational leave allowance be made admissible to contingent personnel for the entirety of 15 days of leave allowed in six months of deployment with a peacekeeping mission.

2. United Nations police officers and United Nations military observers

21. Both United Nations police officers and United Nations military observers are designated as experts on mission, whose normal term of assignment to serve with a peacekeeping mission is one year, which may be extended for operational reasons.

22. United Nations police officers and United Nations military observers earn 1.5 days of annual leave with a mission subsistence allowance for every month of completed service. The earned leave may not be taken in advance, and it must be availed during the tour of duty. No cash payment is made in lieu of unused earned leave.

23. Although the head of the police component, in consultation with the head of mission support, is authorized to establish the hours of work of United Nations police officers, their normal work-week is five days. However, if the United Nations police officers and the United Nations military observers are required, for operational reasons, to remain on active duty on Saturdays, Sundays or official holidays, they are granted compensatory time off. Compensatory time off is intended to provide the personnel opportunities for rest and recuperation after a particularly demanding period of continuous service. One compensatory time off day is earned for every five days of continuous duty, and a maximum of 56 compensatory time off days may be granted in one year. The mission subsistence allowance is paid for all compensatory time off days taken inside or outside the mission area. The same conditions of leave and rest breaks apply to United Nations military observers. In its audit report (AP2006/600/05), OIOS identified instances of inconsistent application of compensatory time off policy across missions and made recommendations with respect to its further elaboration.

Measures to be taken

24. The Department of Field Support and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, will review the current compensatory time off policy in consultation with the Office of Human Resources Management, elaborate it and, in the interest of consistent interpretation and application across various missions, promulgate a revised policy by means of an administrative issuance.

III. General issues of welfare and recreation

25. Given the variety of physical, political and cultural settings in which peacekeeping operations are located, the welfare needs of peacekeeping personnel across the multiple peacekeeping missions vary, and run the gamut from the need for a sufficient supply of basic necessities such as food, potable water and ablution units to that for affordable air transport for recreational breaks to places outside the mission area, or facilitation of cross-border movement of family members of personnel serving at established missions. The welfare needs within a given mission might differ depending on the category of the personnel or the place of their posting and its distance from the mission or regional headquarters. Although infrastructural facilities, equipment and amenities available to personnel posted at a given location often evolve over the lifetime of the mission, the pre ent review identified the need to ensure that considerations of personnel welfare are brought to bear on the Organization's administrative effort at the very early, start-up phase of a mission. Besides, a broad array of welfare-related issues, many of them relevant across the various missions and the categories of peacekeeping personnel, were identified.

A. Security

26. The international personnel, i.e., civilian, United Nations police officers and United Nations military observers, who are deployed far from the mission headquarters at outposts, at times face the threat of violence. They are often deployed unarmed and, as such, are vulnerable to attack, harassment or hostage-taking. Similarly, when they are deployed in urban areas such as Port-au-Prince in Haiti, they are exposed to criminal attacks. Some civilian support staff interviewed in connection with the present review had been involved in crisis incidents such as car-snatchings in northern Darfur, riots and evacuations in Abidjan and even the bombing of the United Nations mission in Baghdad. Considerations of adequate security in both the workplace and at living accommodation being fundamental, they would necessarily underlie any welfare and recreation strategy.

B. Supply of basic catering provisions and utilities

27. The issue of insecure supply of food and potable water is associated in particular with the early, formative phase of a mission, and with personnel stationed at far-flung outposts in large countries such as the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The survey of the practice on catering supplies conducted in connection with the present review identified a number of concerns. For instance, in offices of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), potable water is available for staff, but limited to one bottle

per day, which is a source of hardship for staff stationed in sectors and districts, where bottled water cannot be purchased from shops. In some missions, staff canteens, even at the mission headquarters, were established only two to five years after the launch of the mission. The non-availability of electricity was a source of hardship for personnel stationed in remote areas where the necessary infrastructure did not exist. Similarly, long delays in the establishment of United Nations commissaries or post exchanges, which retail items of daily necessity and commodities to international personnel, were also a source of hardship.

C. Commissaries or post exchange operations

28. The privileges and immunities enjoyed by the United Nations peacekeeping operations include those relating to the exemption of their assets, income and other property from custom duties and from prohibitions and restrictions on imports and exports in respect of articles imported or exported by the peacekeeping operations for their official use, subject to the understanding that articles imported under such exemptions will not be sold in the host country except under conditions agreed with its Government. The status of forces agreement (A/45/594) incorporates provisions whereby the Government of the host country recognizes the right of a United Nations peacekeeping operation to import, duty-free, equipment, provisions and supplies for the exclusive and official use of the United Nations peacekeeping operation or for resale in the commissaries. United Nations post exchanges, which include any post exchange operation, whether managed and operated by the United Nations, a contingent, a contractor or any combination thereof, operate for the benefit of the members of the United Nations peacekeeping operation, but not of locally recruited personnel.

29. In assessing the role of the United Nations post exchanges towards staff welfare, the expert concluded that the post exchange operations played an important role in meeting the supply needs of international personnel, and had the additional merit of generating income that is often used to finance staff welfare and recreational activities. For example, the income generated by the post exchange operation operated in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, by the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), defrayed the salaries not only of the staff working at the post exchange, but also at the mission-run canteens in both India and Pakistan. Despite many benefits that accrue from them, establishment of a post exchange is usually not a priority at mission start-up. Often it has taken years for a post exchange to be established. For example, in MONUC — which mission was launched in late 1999 — a post exchange was established only in 2006.

Measures to be taken

30. The following measures should be taken:

(a) A post exchange should be established at the mission and, if feasible, the sector headquarters at the earliest opportunity to accommodate the supply needs of an expanding staff and to generate dividends from post exchange sales that may be used as income for the mission's welfare fund. A post exchange contract should be opened for bidding prior to deployment if at all feasible, and appropriate space for a post exchange should be provided in initial engineering plans for each mission and sector headquarters. The Department of Field Support, in consultation with the

Department of Peacekeeping Operations, will revise the existing guidance on the subject;

(b) In order to facilitate provision of basic utilities, peacekeeping missions should, where such a need exists and it is feasible to so address it, offer fuel and generators to staff on a cost-sharing basis. Similarly, the supply of electricity to private accommodation for a monthly flat rate, as tried in MONUC, should be included in the repertoire of practices that missions could draw upon for the welfare of their personnel. The Department of Field Support and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will develop appropriate guidance for missions in this regard.

D. Communications

31. One of the key aspects of personnel welfare relates to communications. Because of the nature of their functions in a mission, civilian personnel usually have adequate access to means of communications, e.g., the Internet and telephone. Similarly, United Nations police officers and United Nations military observers, particularly when serving at headquarters duty stations in a mission or at team sites with adequate local infrastructure, have adequate access to means of communication. However, ordinary contingent personnel may face difficulties in maintaining contact with families and friends at home. Although the sense of isolation that may pervade other peacekeeping personnel is mitigated for contingent personnel by virtue of their regimentation, their formed character and training, lack of rear-link facilities for communicating with families and friends, for months at end, can be a serious drain on their morale. Many contingent personnel cannot benefit from Internet facilities because of inadequate linguistic or technical skills. In this regard, the expert identified some best practices, e.g., one of the formed police units deployed with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) had a cellular contract that enabled its members to call or receive calls from home each day at a very low price. Their commanding officer considered this to be essential for morale.

Measures to be taken

32. Provisions in the model memorandum of understanding on Internet availability are not sufficient to provide personal e-mail access for all contingent personnel, and are generally reserved for senior officers. An Internet facility for personal use by all contingent personnel should be made available on each base, to avoid the necessity of leaving the base to use public or mission-provided Internet facilities. In peacekeeping operations where the local communications infrastructure is inadequate, communications can be facilitated by engaging a private, satellite-based service provider, and in cases where the local infrastructure is available, the missions should facilitate the establishment of calling booths through the use of specialized calling cards. The Department of Field Support will review the feasibility of providing such facilities on a cost-recovery basis.[2]

[2] Issue paper No. 2, submitted by the Government of Brazil for the consideration of the Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment at its February 2008 session, relates to the implementation of Internet facilities, and proposes inclusion thereof into the sample list of minor equipment for the self-sustainment subcategory of welfare.

E. Travel on leave and for recreational purposes

33. Under the current policy of the Organization, among the personnel authorized to use a peacekeeping mission's transport assets — surface and air — are international staff members, contingent personnel, United Nations military observers, United Nations police officers, local staff members, United Nations Volunteers and personnel specifically authorized by heads of mission or mission support in this regard. Heads of mission support may authorize "liberty" travel by surface transport vehicle, e.g., for recreational purposes, to sites of interest in the mission area.

34. As to aircraft, since available space is limited, the policy prescribes an order of priority for travelling personnel; those travelling on official business have priority over those travelling in connection with leave. The policy on priority for the execution of booked tasks provides for welfare flights, i.e., travel by chartered flights organized for the welfare of groups of personnel on a cost-recovery basis. Subject to approval by the Department of Field Support, United Nations aircraft may be used for welfare flights if not otherwise required for operational missions, provided the costs involved are paid by the individuals participating in the flight.

35. In the expert's assessment, the existing restriction on the number of staff members permitted on passenger flights contracted by the United Nations to a maximum of 30 adversely affects the staff ability to benefit from, e.g., an occasional recuperation break. The limit has historically existed for reasons related to insurance and continuing viability of mission operations. Since international staff members are often required by missions to proceed outside the mission area in order to avail themselves of an occasional recuperation break, the limit has the consequence that staff members who cannot afford commercial tickets have to forgo the leave break. This policy is currently under review.

36. Subject to the availability of vacant seats, gratis transportation of personnel on leave, to and from destinations in or out of the mission areas, is available in routine resupply flights operated by the Organization. For example, MINUSTAH operates regular resupply flights to Santo Domingo, which usually has seats available for personnel on leave. Similarly, MONUC, the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, the United Nations Mission in Liberia, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste and the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone operate resupply flights that can be utilized by personnel to travel on leave on a space-available basis. In cases where no resupply flights are available, the state of available commercial alternatives is a consideration relevant to the provision of flights or seats to a regional hub from which staff can utilize adequate onward air services.

Measures to be taken

37. In the expert's assessment, some lower-paid categories of peacekeeping personnel, e.g., United Nations Volunteers, were unable to participate in welfare flights owing to issues of affordability. In order to facilitate the charter by personnel of official aircrafts for welfare flights, the Department of Field Support will re-examine, in consultation with other relevant departments in the Secretariat, the current restriction to a maximum of 30 the number of United Nations civilian

personnel allowed on a United Nations aircraft as it effectively precludes a reasonable cost per seat.

F. Leave centres within or outside the mission area

38. In assessing the recreational needs, particularly of contingent personnel, the present review of current practice in missions found that a distinctive set of considerations operated in relation to this category of personnel and, for a variety of reasons, contingent commanders preferred for their soldiers to use the leisure afforded by their leave-time as groups, e.g., group travel to places of interest within or outside the mission area. In MONUC, for instance, while contingent personnel from African troop/police-contributing countries often prefer to proceed to their home countries for leave, many non-African contingents have set up leave centres in Entebbe or Kigali. Some contingents that have elements, e.g., companies, deployed to remote areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have set up transit facilities at their larger camps in order to facilitate the recuperation of members of such remotely deployed elements, e.g., a contingent from one of troop/police-contributing countries has set up a transit camp in Bunia, which is also used for recreational breaks by those of its elements that are deployed far from Bunia. Similarly, a contingent from another troop-contributing country which is based at Lake Albert, a place of natural beauty, offers recreational facilities to those of its members who are deployed in remote areas. Such practices should be supported by the mission.

Measures to be taken

39. Contingents should be encouraged to establish leave centres within the framework of the existing system of self-sustainment, i.e., facilities inside or outside the mission area where contingent personnel could spend the leave allowed them for rest and recuperation; facilities such as a television lounge, DVD players, books and indoor and outdoor games should be provided at the leave centres; such initiatives should be actively supported by the mission headquarters, e.g., in connection with the procurement of camping sites or buildings, transportation to and from the leave centres and provision of authorized rations at the leave centre. In order to standardize practice in this area, the Department of Field Support and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will develop guidance for incorporation into the mission support plan a directive to heads of mission and force commanders, and annex G to the model memorandum of understanding on guidelines to troop/police-contributing countries.

G. Institutional practices and personnel welfare

40. The factors that have a bearing on the welfare of peacekeeping personnel may be located on a continuum of institutional practices relative to human and logistical resources.[3] Considerations of personnel welfare, apart from providing bases for a

[3] For example, the rules that regulate leave and rest breaks and use of the official means of communications and transport are instances of the former; practices relating to basic necessities such as food and water, material resources such as fuel and the transportation fleet and infrastructural facilities such as office and residential accommodation are instances of the latter.

distinct set of "welfare" measures, potentially permeate a broad spectrum of the Organization's practices. The surveys carried out in connection with the present review suggest that many of the current practices are explicable in terms of operational requirements, which are not always coextensive with those of personnel welfare. An example is the practice of deploying personnel to remote districts in order to extend the territorial reach of mission operations and to establish a "visible presence", without sufficient attention to such matters as living accommodation or establishment of a roster of rotations. In cases where the Organization makes deductions from the mission subsistence allowance for the provision of residential accommodation, e.g., in tents or prefabricated containers, the standards of such accommodation suffer by comparison to those available, for the same amount of money, to personnel posted at mission headquarters or other duty stations located in urban centres. Similarly, practices in the sphere of engineering support to missions, involving such matters as office accommodation, sanitation, sewerage, waste management and electricity, derive mainly from operational requirements. There is a need to better orient these practices towards personnel welfare.

IV. Personnel welfare and the strategy for the prevention of misconduct in peacekeeping missions

41. As mentioned above, along with a programme of awareness-raising activities, the provision to peacekeeping personnel of adequate opportunities for welfare and recreation forms an important part of the strategy to prevent serious misconduct on their part, particularly sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. The benefits accruing from such a preventive strategy derive from considerations relating to the personnel in question, the societies hosting peacekeeping missions, the image of the Organization and the continued integrity of the principles that underpin United Nations peacekeeping efforts.

42. Increased attention to the well-being of peacekeeping personnel, apart from being a precept of sound personnel policy, will also be conducive to their stronger identification with the imperatives of peacekeeping that include, as recognized in annex III to the report of the Group of Experts on the standardization of the norms of conduct applicable uniformly to all categories of peacekeeping personnel (A/61/645), acceptance on their part of "special constraints" in their private and public lives. It will strengthen the resources of peacekeeping personnel to cope with the distinctive challenges of peacekeeping.

43. A basic tenet of multidimensional peacekeeping is that it aims to rehabilitate individual lives in societies unravelled by long-standing conflict. Acts on the part of peacekeeping personnel that offend the prescribed code of conduct and impact negatively on lives that are already vulnerable, are intrinsically wrong. Going against the moral grain of peacekeeping as such acts do, they may, even when a few, nevertheless bring peacekeeping missions into disrepute, engendering scepticism towards the viability of peacekeeping and its increasingly multidimensional scope, and tarnishing the image of the United Nations.

44. Given the implications of acts of serious misconduct, I should record my appreciation for the continued commitment shown by Member States to the eradication of all forms of serious misconduct in peacekeeping missions, and for their support of the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

While enforcement action (for example, investigation and prosecution) is a critically important aspect of the response after misconduct has occurred — not least because of its deterrent, hence preventive, impact — eradication of serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, requires an effective strategy for its prevention. The Organization has made significant strides in strengthening enforcement; however, there is a need to complement that effort with measures aiming to further the benefits accruing from improved personnel welfare and recreation in missions. A policy requiring the maintenance of minimum standards of welfare and recreation facilities and activities will not only increase a mission's internal cohesion, but also exercise a salutary effect on its overall ethos.

A. Minimum standards of welfare and recreation facilities

45. The present review is premised on the recognition that instances of failure of peacekeeping personnel to measure up to the prescribed standards of conduct not infrequently have to do with social and psychological challenges that face them in the broken societies amidst which they live and work. The proportionally higher incidence of misconduct among categories of personnel who are deployed individually and, therefore, are unable to draw on social reinforcements, and moral checks and balances that go with deployment as formed bodies, is an example.

46. In the workday life of peacekeeping personnel, the leisure afforded by their off-duty hours is fraught, for they are unable to engage in pastimes and pursuits that require the presence of family, or possibly even friends. Conceptions of minimum standards of welfare and recreation facilities should, therefore — beyond the proposals relating to the secure supply of basic catering provisions, utilities and adequate accommodation — be developed by reference to this leisure, and provision should be made to alleviate the sense of isolation that often marks it.

47. An examination of current practices within missions, and elsewhere outside the Organization, suggested that the minimum standards of facilities for welfare and recreation of all categories of peacekeeping personnel entail the provision of installations, equipment and amenities enabling a range of outdoor and indoor sporting, social and cultural activities, such as gymnasiums, darts, card games, a television lounge, reading room or library, volleyball, badminton, lawn and table tennis courts.

B. Minimum recreation facilities for contingent personnel

48. As mentioned above, contribution of military and formed police contingents by troop/police-contributing countries to the United Nations peacekeeping operations are regulated by the model memorandum of understanding, which comprises, inter alia, terms of understanding between the parties on the self-sustainment subcategory of welfare. Troop/police-contributing countries receive reimbursements at the rate of $6.01 per contingent member per month. Thus, an annual sum of $61,302.00 is claimed by a troop/police-contributing country in relation to its welfare spending on a battalion of 850 members serving with a peacekeeping operation. In addition to other contingent personnel, the reimbursements have historically also included military staff officers. As staff officers have been authorized to receive a mission subsistence allowance

commencing on 1 July 2007, welfare reimbursements for staff officers have been discontinued.

49. The standards of welfare that a troop/police-contributing country should verifiably provide to its contingent personnel in order to qualify for reimbursement against this subcategory are set out in annex E to the model memorandum of understanding. These minimum standards of welfare and recreation facilities, which apply to the most numerous category of peacekeeping personnel, are suggestive of the standards that might potentially be adopted for non-contingent personnel as well.

50. At present, the relevant standards are formulated in terms of appropriate levels of equipment and amenities for the morale and well-being of troop/police contributor's personnel. In the past, the performance standards that the party responsible for contingent personnel welfare was required to meet were formulated in more specific terms. For example, the standards adopted by the Phase III Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment in its report (A/C.5/49/70) were based on an indicative list of amenities, including equipment such as video-cassette recorders (VCRs), televisions, stereos, sports and fitness equipment, games and reading library. Subsequently, the standards were revised and couched in general terms. There is a need to reformulate the present standards and to spell them out.

Measures to be taken

51. The following measures are to be taken:

(a) The Department of Field Support and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will submit Secretariat issue paper No. 9 for the consideration of the Working Group at its session from 4 to 22 February 2008, recommending the revision of performance standards in the subcategory of welfare with a view to spelling them out in specific terms;

(b) It is further proposed that, within the framework of the revised minimum standards of welfare provided elsewhere in the Manual, annex G to the model memorandum of understanding, guidelines to troop/police-contributing countries, should include a description of the minimum welfare and recreation facilities that the respective troop/police-contributing country would be required to furnish for the peacekeeping mission in question, in order to qualify for reimbursement for the welfare subcategory.

System of payments to troop/police-contributing countries for the welfare of contingent personnel

52. The survey on the actual use of funds paid to troop/police-contributing countries for the welfare of their contingent members, carried out in connection with the present review, revealed that practice in this area is inconsistent. For example, some contingents deployed with MONUC provided their members with funds to lease welfare houses in Kinshasa and Entebbe for use by troops on leave or in transit. Some of the contingents deployed with MINUSTAH have set up gymnasiums of different sizes for the welfare of their personnel. However, the performance of many troop/police-contributing countries in this regard leaves much to be desired. The observation made by OIOS in paragraph 48 of its report on the global review of discipline in field missions led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (A/60/713), that most contingents deployed without any form of or very

few welfare and recreational facilities is an example. OIOS urged the missions to regularly review the extent to which contingents use funds paid for welfare self-sustainment.

53. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations has, particularly in the course of its deliberations on the problem of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, emphasized the primary responsibility of troop/police-contributing countries to provide for the welfare of their contingent personnel. In concluding its recommendations on revisions to the model memorandum of understanding, that aimed at better enforcement of United Nations standards of conduct, it took care to include a new provision on welfare (A/61/19 (Part III), annex, article 7 ter, para. 5) which requires that "the Government shall use its welfare payments to provide adequate welfare and recreation facilities to its contingent members in the mission".

Measures to be taken

54. The Department of Field Support and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will submit to the Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment for its consideration at its session from 4 to 22 February 2008 an issue paper on the minimum standards of welfare and recreation facilities to be provided by the troop/police-contributing countries contingent personnel.[4]

C. Minimum recreation facilities for non-contingent personnel

55. The present review identified a need to provide minimum levels of welfare and recreation facilities for non-contingent personnel, including international and local staff members, United Nations police officers, United Nations Volunteers and United Nations military observers, at their respective duty stations[5] in the regions and districts. The need for such facilities is more acutely felt in outlying districts, far from the mission headquarters. For example, MONUC which has regional offices in Bukavu, Bunia, Kisangani and Goma, also has outposts in far-flung districts such as Mbandaka, Mbuji-Mayi, Uvira, Beni and Matadi. Various categories of non-contingent personnel, including international and local staff members, United Nations police officers and United Nations military observers, are deployed at these outposts, with little access to recreational facilities. Similarly, in MINUSTAH, the state of welfare of the personnel posted to the regional duty stations of Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves and Les Cayes leaves much to be desired. It would be unrealistic for the Organization to expect these personnel to provide for infrastructural facilities such as a gymnasium and a recreational lounge. Once the basic installations and equipment are in place, however, they can run, manage and operate the facilities on a self-help basis. For example, they can institute admission fees for use of the facilities, and the funds so generated can be used to further enhance the minimum amenities available.

56. Since the minimum standards of welfare and recreation facilities should be consistent across the various categories of peacekeeping personnel, the standards for facilities to be provided to non-contingent personnel may be linked to those applicable to contingent personnel, which, as proposed above, would involve the

[4] Secretariat issue paper No. 9 includes, inter alia, this proposal.

[5] Duty stations in mission areas, which are established on a relatively stable basis.

provision at the respective duty stations of installations and appropriate levels of equipment, including televisions, VCRs, sports and fitness equipment, games and reading library.

Proposal

57. There is clearly a need for minimum welfare and recreation facilities for various categories of non-contingent personnel at duty stations in peacekeeping missions. Such facilities may include "welfare kits", comprising generic equipment, as follows:

(a) An indoor gymnasium installed with industrial-grade equipment;

(b) A multi-purpose recreation centre to be used as an indoor lounge, an Internet cafe and bar, provided with indoor games such as table tennis, darts, board games and refreshments, a television set with a VCR/DVD player and accessories;

(c) A library and a prayer/meditation room.

V. Personnel capacity for welfare and recreation functions

58. As to personnel resources available to missions for performance of functions relating to welfare and recreation, apart from the staff of mission support offices, staff welfare committees are the main bodies for designing welfare programmes and organizing recreational activities. These committees, which are based on voluntary commitment, have been set up in most missions and comprise representatives of the staff and the field staff union. The composition of welfare committees at the mission and regional headquarters has been standardized to include representatives of the Conduct and Discipline Unit, staff counsellors, civilian staff, police and military components.

59. Some missions, such as MONUC and MINUSTAH, have the post of welfare officer who can assist heads of mission support in the discharge of their role on welfare. In missions where the posts of welfare officers do not exist e.g., UNMIL, MINURSO, UNMIN and UNMIT, the responsibility for welfare is delegated to administrative staff of the heads of mission support on welfare-related matters. In some missions, e.g., UNAMA and UNMIS, staff counsellors have come to additionally perform welfare functions. As regards welfare functions in relation to contingent personnel, contingents are authorized under the model memorandum of understanding to include a welfare officer as part of the national support element. In most missions the force headquarters has a welfare officer.

60. The staff counselling units in peacekeeping missions are staffed mostly by counsellors at the P-4 level. Staff counsellors have academic qualifications in psychology, psychiatry or psycho-educational studies, and specialize in fields such as alcohol/substance abuse, stress management, critical incident stress and conflict resolution. Given their academic qualification, training, experience and their actual job description, staff counsellors perform functions that are significantly diagnostic or therapeutic in character, and are not suited to the requirements of the relatively broader discipline of staff welfare.

61. Since members of staff welfare committees work as volunteers, and staff counsellors' functions are of a limited and technical nature, there is absence in

missions of a comprehensive, coherent and systematic approach to issues of welfare affecting all categories of peacekeeping personnel. While personnel participation and input into the designing, development and management of welfare practices, facilities, and activities is a vital part of the welfare effort, substantial gains in terms of scope, coherence and effect would be made by providing dedicated welfare staff to coordinate these functions.

Measures to be taken

62. The following measures should be taken: the allocation and performance of personnel welfare functions vary from mission to mission and, currently, there is in most missions no focal point dedicated at an appropriate level to the welfare of all categories of peacekeeping personnel. It is anticipated that some of the proposals made in the present review, e.g., those relating to the provision and maintenance of minimum recreational facilities for non-contingent personnel at the respective duty stations in mission areas, if approved, would give rise to an increasing set of distinct welfare functions of a recurrent, routine nature, strengthening the need to establish welfare officers and units in peacekeeping missions.

Conclusion

63. Although the formal arrangements underlying service with peacekeeping missions are myriad, one purpose that binds peacekeeping personnel of diverse categories is their common service in the pursuit of peace. In order to better attain that purpose, all of them need to act as one, and in a manner that becomes the dignity of the purpose. Implementation of a personnel welfare strategy that aims to more closely align practices in the field to the well-being of peacekeeping personnel, to enhance the daily round of their lives at duty stations in mission headquarters and outposts, and to provide them with a modicum of logistical wherewithal enabling recreational activities, will help bolster their shared sense of purpose and their ability to observe the special constraints that life in peacekeeping missions entails.

VI. Actions to be taken by the General Assembly at its sixty-second resumed session

64. **The General Assembly may wish:**

(a) **To take note of the measures to be undertaken by the Secretariat as part of its continuing effort to improve the welfare of all categories of peacekeeping personnel, as described in paragraphs 20, 24, 30, 32, 37, 39, 51, 54 and 62 of the present report;**

(b) **To endorse the need for welfare and recreation arrangements for non-contingent personnel across the various peacekeeping missions, as described in paragraph 57.**